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REMARKS

Claims 1-57 are pending in this application. Claims 1, 20 and 40 are the independent claims.

Claims 1, 20 and 40 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Cabrera et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,381,394. Claims 2-19, 21-39 and 41-57 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Cabrera et al. These rejections are hereby traversed for at least the following reasons.

The present invention as set forth in claim 1 provides an optical amplifier module containing at least one optical amplifier. The optical amplifier module comprising an internal housing having an outer dimension substantially equal to an outer dimension of an internal fiber splice housing of an undersea optical fiber cable joint. The internal including: (i) a pair of opposing end faces each having a retaining element for retaining the internal housing within an outer housing of said undersea optical fiber cable joint; (ii) a sidewall interconnecting said opposing end faces and extending between said opposing end faces in a longitudinal direction, said sidewall including a receptacle portion having a plurality of thru-holes each being sized to receive a passive optical component employed in an optical amplifier; (iii) at least one circuit board on which reside electronics associated with the optical amplifier; and (iv) an isolated electrical path for providing electrical power received from a conductor in at least one optical fiber cable to the at least one circuit board.

In the particular embodiment of the invention set forth in the figures of the application, the claimed *internal housing* corresponds to internal housing 404, which is formed from half units 404 and 404' (see figures 4 and 5), the claimed *sidewall* of the internal housing corresponds to curved sidewalls 412, and the claimed thru-holes located in the sidewall corresponds to receptacles 418.

The Examiner asserts that Cabrera et al. discloses each of the elements set forth in claim 1. Specifically, the Examiner asserts that the claimed *internal housing* corresponds to the internal structure 350, the claimed *sidewall* of the internal housing corresponds to top module 370 (see figures 3 and 13 of the reference), and the claimed *thru-holes* correspond to grooves 500, flanges 530 and apertures 550. Applicants respectfully submit

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that this correspondence between the elements of the claim and the elements shown in Cabrera et al. is incorrect.

Specifically, the present invention sets forth that the claimed *sidewall* (in which the claimed *thru-holes* are located) is a part of the claimed *internal housing*. However, in Cabrera et al., the top module 370 is not a part of internal structure 350. As noted at column 4, lines 33-36, the internal structure 350 is defined by mounting plates 302 and 303, power supply assembly 301, heat transfer plate 310 and spring plate 340. Located within the internal structure 350 are modular assemblies 330 (also referred to as amplifier pairs), which include base modules 320, 321 and 322 (see figure 4 of the reference and column 4, lines 1-9). The base modules 320, 321 and 322 are positioned in internal structure 350 (see column 4, lines 33-34). Accordingly, rather than being a part of internal structure 350 as required by claim 1 of the present application, top module 370 is a part of the modular assembly 330, which is in turn located within internal structure 350.

Since Cabrera et al. does not show an internal structure having a sidewall in which thru-holes are provided for receiving a passive optical component, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of independent claim 1 be reconsidered and withdrawn. The rejection of independent claims 20 and 40 should also be reconsidered and withdrawn for at least those reasons presented above with respect to claim 1. The rejection of the dependent claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) should also be reconsidered and withdrawn since each depends from and further defines the invention set forth in the independent claims.

Conclusion

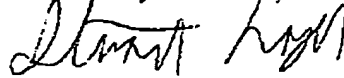
In view of the foregoing, it is believed that the application is now in condition for allowance and early passage of this case to issue is respectfully requested. If the Examiner believes there are still unresolved issues, a telephone call to the undersigned would be welcomed.

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Fees

If there any fees due and owing in respect to this amendment, the Examiner is authorized to charge such fees to deposit account number 50-1047.

Respectfully submitted,



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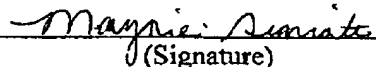
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